

# The White House

## Unofficial Tour Guide



# **White House Tour Guide**

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*\*Note: This guide was created by Quinn Fitzgerald and Lee Sova-Claypool from OPE and is not an official tour guide. It is for the use of White House staffers only and should not be distributed.*

# **White House Overview**

## **WHITE HOUSE HISTORY**

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- Oldest public building in Washington.
- The White House is the only residence of a head of state that is open to the public on a regular basis free of charge.
- Construction began in 1792 under George Washington.
  - George Washington never got to live in the White House.
- 1800: President John Adams and wife, Abigail, were first to move in.
- The White House is also referred to as the President's House and the Executive Mansion, but Theodore Roosevelt made "The White House" the official name in 1901.
- White House construction dates:
  - 1792 (the laying of the White House cornerstone)
  - 1817 (the re-opening of the White House after the 1814 burning during the War of 1812)
  - 1902 (the Theodore Roosevelt renovation)
  - 1952 (Truman renovation)
- Survived fires in 1814 and 1929
  - The 1929 fire was caused by a blocked fireplace on Christmas Eve. Then President Hoover left his Christmas party to direct firefighting efforts until Secret Service intervened.
- Including its two basement levels, the White House is almost 100,000 square feet
  - The White House has its own medical clinic and dental office.
  - The recreational facilities include: exercise room, a billiard room, a movie theatre, a bowling alley, a swimming pool, a tennis court / basketball court, a putting green, a jogging track, and a horseshoe pit.
  - Indoor plumbing was first installed in 1834.
  - The first elevator, a hydraulic elevator, was installed in 1881.
  - Electricity was first introduced to the White House in 1891.
  - 132 rooms and 35 bathrooms, 412 doors and 147 windows, 28 fireplaces and 8 staircases
- There is a White House florist in charge of designing and changing the floral arrangements- see flowers on ROTUS' desk.
  - The White House florist is also responsible for holiday decorations, see photo of Halloween 2013 (4).

## **PETS IN THE WHITE HOUSE**

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- Most former Presidents had dogs and cats, but there have been a variety of unusual pets in the White House.
- John Quincy Adams and Herbert Hoover both had pet alligators. Hoover's son, Allen Henry Hoover, had 2 gators that the president sometimes let run around the White House grounds. John Quincy Adams' gator was a gift from the Marquis de Lafayette.
- Thomas Jefferson had a pet mockingbird that flew freely around the White House unless they had guests.
- Calvin and Grace Coolidge had the most animals by far. Along with 12 dogs, they had a donkey, a goose, bobcat, raccoons, lion cubs, a bear, a wallaby, and a pygmy hippo.
- Teddy Roosevelt also had many pets, including horses, snakes, and a flying squirrel!
- William Howard Taft had the last two cows at the White House to date.
  - The lion cubs (named Tax Reduction and Budget Bureau), the wallaby, the hippo and the bear were given to them foreign dignitaries.
- President Eisenhower's parakeet, Gabby, was buried in 1957 at the southwest corner of the Executive Mansion.
- John F. Kennedy had canaries, parakeets, horses, hamsters and rabbits. He also had a mutt named Pushinka that was a gift from Nikita Khrushchev.
- The Obamas have two Portuguese water dogs, Bo and Sunny. The breed was chosen in part due to Malia Obama's allergies.
- Bo was a gift from Senator Ted Kennedy. Sunny was adopted by a breeder, so the Obamas made a donation to the Humane Society in her name.
- Bo is often referred to as "The First Dog" or DOTUS (Dog of the United States).

## WHITE HOUSE FACTS QUIZ

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- What two countries house twin buildings to the White House?
  - France & Ireland. The first is a tourist attraction and the second houses the Irish President. Some think the Irish version was influenced by Irish architect James Hoban, who designed the DC White House.
- What practical joke did Clinton staffers play on George W. Bush Staffers before leaving?
  - Rumor has it aides from Clinton's administration removed all "W"s from keyboards before George W. Bush took office!
- How did Winston Churchill startle White House staff during his visit for 24 days in 1941?
  - Mr. Churchill refused to wear any clothes when he was in his room.
- Who was president for only 32 days and why?
  - William Henry Harrison was president only 32 days. He caught pneumonia and died after standing outside for hours during his inauguration.
- Who established Hail to the Chief as the President's arrival number?
  - First Lady Sarah Polk: President James Polk was not an impressive figure, so something was needed in the form of an announcement when he entered the room.

## WHITE HOUSE ART

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- The White House Historical Association is a charitable nonprofit institution whose purpose is to enhance the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the White House. From private funding and the sale of its educational products, the Association supports the acquisition of artwork and objects for the White House collection and contributes to the conservation of the public rooms.
- The White House collection contains some of the finest art and sculptures in the world. It is an ever changing collection, featuring donations by artists and organizations as well as pieces procured by Presidents and First Ladies themselves.
- Gilbert Stuart's idealized portrait of the first President, George Washington, housed in the East Room, is the cornerstone of the collection
- First Ladies of recent decades deserve great credit for much of the art featured in this collection on-line.
  - Jacqueline Kennedy set the goal of collecting works by the country's finest artists.
  - Lady Bird Johnson enthusiastically continued that pursuit.
  - Patricia Nixon's efforts added 18 portraits of Presidents and First Ladies.
  - Elizabeth Ford, Rosalynn Carter, Nancy Reagan, Barbara Bush and Hillary Rodham Clinton also have taken a special interest in the history of the mansion.
  - First Lady Clinton initiated eight exhibitions of twentieth century American sculpture during her term.
- They, and the collection itself, have been immeasurably helped by former curators of the White House--Lorraine Pearce, William Elder, James Ketchum, and Clement Conger--and by the present curator, Betty Monkman, and other members of the curatorial staff.

# **West Wing Tour Guide**

## **EISENHOWER EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING**

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- Design: Supervising Architect of the Treasury, Alfred Mullet
  - The architects' style was unpopular at the time and he was widely criticized.
  - In financial trouble and poor health, he killed himself at the age of 56 in 1890.
- French Second Empire architecture style.
- 2 miles of corridor and 900 exterior columns.
- Former State, Navy, and War Department Building.
- Construction began in 1871 & lasted 17 years.
- Formerly OEOB, renamed by Clinton in 1999, rededicated by Bush in 2002.
- Houses Indian Treaty Room and Office of the Vice President (former Office of Secretary of Navy).
- Theodore and Franklin D. Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Lyndon B. Johnson, Gerald Ford, and George H. W. Bush all had offices in this building before becoming President.
- Japanese emissaries met here with Secretary of State Cordell Hull after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

## **WEST EXECUTIVE AVENUE**

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- When President travels by motorcade, he leaves South Grounds driveway.
- VPOTUS and other visiting cabinet members arrive on West Exec.
- Flip to the back page to see a photo (1) of a plane landing on West Exec!

## **WEST WING INTRODUCTION**

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- Constructed 1902 under Theodore Roosevelt.
  - Wanted a place to work in peace & quiet.
- Two major expansions 1909 (TR) and 1934 (FDR).
- Office of the President and immediate staff.
  - Over 100 in WW
  - Over 60 in EW
  - Remaining 2000 EOP employees in EEOB and NEOB

### **Jumbo Pictures**

- Taken by WH photographers.
- Five photographers in department, headed by Pete Souza.
- They take thousands of photos every day.
- Change jumbos 1-2 times a month, depending on Presidential activities.
- President Obama is the first president to use digital photography for all photos and the first to display them in this manner on the walls of the White House.

## **WEST WING BASEMENT**

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- Vice President's Hallway (His Office is on First Floor)
  - Jumbos are all of Vice President Biden instead of the President.
- Statue recreation of the historic Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima photograph in the WW Basement Lobby.
- Houses:
  - Staff Secretary, Photo Office, Homeland Security, Secret Service, Director of Speechwriting, NSC Staff



## WHITE HOUSE MESS

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### Mess Hallway

- Each military branch is responsible for a facet of the WH (Air Force runs AF1, Marines run Marine 1, Army handles ground transport, Navy does WH Mess & Camp David- formerly known as Shangri-La)
- Nautical themed hallway.
- Mess going behind desk is originally from USS Constitution.

#### *Freedom Tower*

- Depicts the new Freedom Tower in NYC, and the USS New York, the ship built with steel salvaged from the fallen World Trade Center.

### Mess History

- U.S. Navy stewards have been responsible for Presidential food service since 1880, when President Hayes used the U.S.S. *Despatch* as the first Presidential yacht
- WH Mess was established in 1951 by President Truman

### Current Mess

- Used by commissioned officers by reservation only
- Exec. dining room: assistants to the President and Cabinet members
- Staff dining room: all commissioned officers
- Ward room: by reservation - group setting

## SITUATION ROOM

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- Est. 1962 (JFK) after Bay of Pigs crisis
- Secure room where POTUS has intel briefings
- Multiple conference rooms and 2 entrances
- Secure video teleconference capability
- Operational 24 hours/day, 7 days a week. Responsible for always being able to get in touch with POTUS and VPOTUS
- Direct link to communication channels of State, DOD, CIA.

## **ROSE GARDEN and WW 1<sup>st</sup> FLOOR HALLWAY**

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### **West Colonnade**

- Famous 45 second walk from Residence to WW daily, see photo (5)
- Colonnade created by FDR so handicap accessible.
- WH one of the first buildings in America to be handicap accessible.
- East Colonnade is indoors- runs from the East Wing to the Residence.

### **Rose Garden**

- Ellen A. Wilson, first wife of WW, created first Rose Garden, 1913
- Redesigned in 1961 for President and Mrs. JFK.
- Rose Garden was the location of the 2009 “Beer Summit”, where POTUS met with Prof. Henry Louis Gates and Sgt. James Crowley to discuss their recent racial controversy, see photo (3).
- The President often gives remarks from the Rose Garden.
- Rose Garden Weddings:
  - June 12, 1971: Tricia Nixon (daughter of President Nixon)
  - May 28, 1994: Anthony Rodham (brother of Hillary Clinton)

### **South Lawn**

- Presidential arrivals and departures on Marine One.
- The swing set & playground is located behind the oval office to the right.
- Truman Balcony, established by Truman 1948.
  - The stars on the ceiling of the Oval Office have 8 points instead of 5. They were going to fix them, but had spent too much money on the Truman Balcony construction and have since left them.
- Woodrow Wilson kept a flock of sheep on the White House lawn during World War I as a symbol of support for the troops. An auction for their wool raised 52K for the Red Cross, see photo (2).
- Jimmy Carter’s daughter Amy, had a treehouse on the South Lawn.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Floor Hallway**

- Only 3 jumbos do not change: Bin Laden raid, McKayla Maroney, Jacob Philadelphia “I want to know if my hair is just like yours”

## **CABINET ROOM**

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- President must be physically in room to use.
- Used for meetings with: Cabinet, NSC, MoCs Heads of State
- SCIF (Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility) – point out the box for phones.
- Mahogany table – will seat 24 – Gift from President Nixon 1970, see photo (4) on back pages.
- President has some discretion when creating Cabinet rank officials.
- Obama Administration:
  - 15 Cabinet members
  - 7 Cabinet rank officials, including: CoS and VP, EPA Admin., OMB Director, CEA Chair, USTR, US Ambassador to UN

### **Chairs**

- Each Cabinet member assigned chair (can purchase upon completion).
- POTUS's chair is tallest, has red button on table: President can alert stewards w/out breaching security.
- Positioned at table according to date dept. was established, photo (6).
  - Secretary of State sits on President's right
  - VP sits opposite President
  - Sec. Treasury sits on VP's right
  - Attorney General sits on VP's left
  - Senior Staff sits on outside border
- Chairs bear brass plates indicating cabinet position and dates of service.
  - VP Cheney three plates: VP, Defense (41), Chief of Staff (Ford)
  - Rumsfeld five plates: Economic Advisory & Counselor (Cabinet ranks under Nixon), CoS (Ford), oldest and youngest SoDefense (Ford and 43)

### **Cabinet Art**

- Each President selects art to decorate the room.
- One of the few paintings of George Washington not wearing a wig.
- President Bush chose:
  - Marble busts: Washington & B. Franklin
  - Portraits: TR, Jefferson, Eisenhower, Washington
  - Painting of signing of Declaration of Independence

## **Outer Oval**

**Watch Meeting - Dec. 31st 1862 - Waiting For the Hour** by William Tolman Carlton, oil on canvas, 1863

- Gift of the Republican National Finance Committee, 1972
- This painting depicts slaves waiting on December 31, 1862 for the stroke of midnight, the moment at which Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was to take effect.
- The focal point of the dramatically lit room is the watch held at the center of the composition, its anchor-shaped fob a Christian symbol of hope.
- This work was probably a study for the currently lost original given to Abraham Lincoln by William Lloyd Garrison as a representative of an abolitionist group

## **OVAL OFFICE**

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### **Overview**

- First Oval Office built in 1909 in center of south side of WW (Taft).
- 1934 moved to current location by FDR to overlook Rose Garden.
- Each President decorates office according to own taste
  - President Obama- First President to have wallpaper
  - Has apples on table- symbol of health
- Constants: White marble mantel, Presidential seal in plaster on ceiling, two flags behind President's desk (U.S. and President's flag).
- President's formal workspace; spends most of day here in meetings.
- Door on the left is the secretary/ personal aid (see peephole), door on the right is the President's private dining room and office w/ computer
- Seating: If looking at fireplace (which works!)- President sits on right and visiting head of state sits on left.

### **Why is the Oval Office Oval?**

- Built to match the oval rooms in the residence, including blue room.
- Oval rooms date back to Washington, who favored them for hosting receptions so that his guests could stand in a circle around him and everyone was equal distance from him, a symbol of Democracy.

## **Sculptures**

### **Bronco Buster by Frederic Remington**

- An original cast - a gift of Miss Virginia Hatfield and Mrs. Louis Hatfield Stickney during the Carter Administration
- Bronze sculpture made in 1895 by Remington- who was declared legally blind before he died in 1909
- First and most popular Remington sculpture- of a Western frontier cowboy fighting to stay on a rearing bronco, with a stirrup swinging free, a quirt in one hand and a fistful of mane and reins in the other.

### **Busts**

- Abraham Lincoln - by George Henry Story - oil on canvas, c.1915
- Dwight D. Eisenhower - by Nison Tregor, bronze bust, 1957
- MLK -- first non-head of state to have a bust in the Oval Office
- Winston Churchill (Bush admin.) was first foreign head of state

## **Resolute Desk**

- Made from timbers of HMS Resolute.
  - Abandoned at sea during British expedition 1854.
  - Recovered by US whaling ship; refurbished and returned to Queen Victoria 1855.
- Queen Victoria gave desk to President Hayes in 1880.
- Every President has used the desk in some capacity (not always in the Oval) except LBJ, Nixon, and Gerald Ford.
- Lyndon B. Johnson was too tall for the desk, and Ronald Raegan raised the desk by 2 inches to accommodate taller owners.
- Presidential Seal on Desk
  - Vanity panel created under FDR to hide wheelchair (eagle faces left towards arrow)
  - Until 1945, eagle could face either way (arrows or olive branch)
  - 1945 Truman signed Executive Order requiring eagle to face olive branch as a sign of peace (right)

## **Oval Office Art**

### **Two paintings by Edward Hopper [1882-1967]**

- Entitled Cobb's Barns, South Truro; Burly Cobb's House, South Truro
- Brought into the Oval Office by Obama on February 7, 2014
- Both oil on canvas works painted in 1930-33 on Cape Cod, MA
- On loan from the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York
- Before building a house on Cape Cod in 1934, Hopper and his wife rented a hillside cottage for 4 summers. From that house, Hopper executed a series of paintings and drawings of the buildings on their landlord's farm, exploring the structures from several angles and at different times.

### **The Avenue in the Rain by Frederick Childe Hassam**

- Depicts 5<sup>th</sup> Ave in NYC 5 weeks before the US declared war on Germany.

### **George Washington by Rembrandt Peale, c.1823**

### **Abraham Lincoln by George Henry Story, c.1915 (from life studies painted in 1861)**

## **Oval Office Rug**

- Each President is able to design their own rug, 30'5" by 23'5"
- Rug Designed by Obama contains some of his favorite quotes:
  - "The Only Thing We Have to Fear is Fear Itself"
    - President Franklin D. Roosevelt
  - "The Arc of the Moral Universe is Long, But it Bends Towards Justice"
    - Martin Luther King Jr.
  - "Government of the People, By the People, For the People"
    - President Abraham Lincoln
  - "No Problem of Human Destiny is Beyond Human Beings"
    - President John F. Kennedy
  - "The Welfare of Each of Us is Dependent Fundamentally Upon the Welfare of All of Us"
    - President Theodore Roosevelt

## **Offices on the First Floor WW**

- Chief of Staff and two Deputy Chiefs, Vice President, 2 Senior Advisors, National Security Advisor, Press Secretary, Communications Director, Deputy Communications Director

## **Second Floor WW Offices**

- Leg. Affairs, WH Counsel, Senior Advisor, DPC, NEC, Cabinet Affairs, IGA, OPE

## ROOSEVELT ROOM

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- Occupies the original site of the president's office when the West Wing was built in 1902. Seven years later, the room became a part of two waiting rooms when the West Wing was expanded and the Oval Office was built.
- The skylight (built in 1934- when Oval Office was moved and it became a conference room) is fake- there is a floor above it.
- Used for high-level staff meetings and conferences.
- Named by FDR as "Fish Room" because of fishing mementos placed by FDR and continued by JFK.
  - FDR installed aquarium, JFK mounted sailfish he caught in Acapulco.
- 1696 Nixon named to honor; TR (role in constructing WW) and FDR (expanded WW).
- The armoire has a large screen for Presentations.

### Nobel Peace Prize- in glass case left of fireplace

- Awarded to TR in 1906 for mediation of Russo-Japanese War peace settlement.
- First Nobel Peace Prize awarded to an American.
- TR Association presented medal to President Reagan as a gift to WH on 125th anniversary of TR's birth.
- TR, Wilson, and Obama only Presidents to win NPP while in office.

### Congressional Medal of Honor- next to door- on left when looking in

- Awarded posthumously in 2001 to TR.
- Honors TR's efforts in Spanish-American War's Battle of San Juan Hill.

### Flags

- Service flags: U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard
- Also, President's (navy blue) and VP's (white)
- On each branch's flag, streamer representing wars, campaigns, engagements, Presidential citations.
  - U.S. Army has most

### Rough Rider- by Tade Styka over mantle

- Portrait of TR

## LOWER PRESS HALLWAY

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### **George Catlin Paintings**

- George Catlin (1796-1872) journeyed west five times in the 1830s to paint the Plains Indians and their way of life.
- Catlin was the first artist to record the Plains Indians in their own territories.
- Catlin lobbied the U.S. government for patronage throughout his career, hoping Congress would purchase the Indian Gallery as a legacy for future generations.
- Disappointed in this goal, Catlin went bankrupt in 1852. A Philadelphia industrialist paid Catlin's debts and acquired the Indian Gallery, and soon after Catlin's death, the paintings were donated to the Smithsonian.
- Today Catlin's Indian Gallery is recognized as a great cultural treasure, offering rare insight into native cultures and a crucial chapter in American history.
- His portraits are on display at the National Portrait Gallery.
- These paintings have been on loan from National Gallery of Art since Reagan Admin.

### **So You Want to See the President**

- By Norman Rockwell
- Four-panel illustration drawn for the November 13, 1943 *Saturday Evening Post*
- Steve Early, FDR's Press Sec, facilitated Rockwell's 3-day visit
- Rockwell sketched actual WW lobby visitors waiting to see POTUS (including Miss America).
  - Artist placed himself in all four panels, find him!
- Rockwell gave to Early as gift of appreciation.
  - Early died, family found sketches in attic, Early's Grandson loaned to WH in 1978.
- Frames made from bird's eye maple from Rockwell front yard.
- 1978 appraised \$12,000, now considered priceless.
- No prints ever made of sketches.
- NEVER to be loaned out or to go on tour.



## **WEST WING LOBBY**

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- Waiting area for visitors who have appointments w/President or staff, including heads of state.
- Nixon created current WW lobby when est. separate press room.
- Mrs. Clinton had ROTUS' desk created with computer inside.

### **Gallery Clock**

- Wood with Gilded gold, c.1810
- Made by Simon Willard, most prominent member in famous clock making Smith family.
- Type used in churches and public assembly buildings.
- 13 balls coming out of eagle's mouth represent the 13 colonies.
- Notice the number four has four bars instead of traditional Roman numeral- Willard felt the roman numeral 4 ruined the symmetry.

### **Emigrant Scene** Attributed to William Henry Powell

- Depicts wagon train members receiving directions from Native American guide
- The picture took him several years to make- started at the age of 14
- There is disagreement about which side he began on because one side is much more detailed.
  - Did he start strong and get bored along the way or did he get more skilled and complex as he went along?

### **Bookcase**

- Oldest piece of furniture in the White House- older than the White House!
- Mahogany, c.1770
- Contains bound copies of presidential documents
  - Speeches, proclamations, executive orders, etc.

### **Washington Crossing the Delaware** by Emanuel Leutze this copy by Eastman Johnson

- Authorized reproduction of American Revolution scene- Original displayed in Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY
- Washington crossed the Delaware on Christmas Day 1776

- Historical inaccuracies exist but purpose of painting is symbolic representation of "cycle of freedom"
  - Washington crossed the Delaware at night
  - No flag
  - Delaware River didn't have icebergs- it had some ice but was not frozen over
  - Women would not have been rowing the boat
  - Washington was afraid of water and would not have been standing. He was also 44 years old at the time of the crossing
  - They crossed on flat bottom boats
  - Horses and cannons were probably taken across the River on ferry boats and other watercrafts after Washington made it across
  - The section of the river they crossed was 300 yards wide

**Vernal Falls, Yosemite** by Thomas Hill (1829-1908)

- Gift of the White House Historical Association, 1973
- Hill moved permanently to California in 1871, he became best known for his many landscapes of Yosemite Valley.

**Old Faithful** by Albert Bierstadt, 1881

**Cannonading on the Potomac October, 1861** By Wordsworth Thompson

- Depicts Battle of Balls Bluff- Civil War battle near Leesburg, VA
- The man in the red cape on the horse was a good friend of Abraham Lincoln's named Edward Dickinson Baker- he was killed during the battle and Lincoln later named one of his sons after him
- Also, there was a member of the Fife and Drum Corps who was injured multiple times during the battle- each time he was patched up and he got back to the action

**Ships (Official Title is listed on the frame)** By W.J Huggins

- Depicts the first naval engagement between the US and the British during the war of 1812
- W.J. Huggins was a popular English marine painter who lived from 1781-1845

**Shinnecock Hills, Long Island** By William Merritt Chase

**View of Gookin Falls, Rutland, Vermont – 1848** by Frederic Edwin Church

## **WEST WING ENTRANCE AND NORTH LAWN**

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- Pennsylvania Avenue closed since 1995- Oklahoma City bombing
  - Now only open for pedestrians, Inaugural Parade
- A Marine stands guard at the North door to the West Wing whenever the President is in the West Wing.
- Press Stake Out: After an official (member of Congress, Senator, Head of State) meets with POTUS, can go in front of WW to tell reporters what was said in meeting
- There are “North” and “South” sides of the White House so that dignitaries do not enter or exit via a “back” or “front” door.

### **Pebble Beach**

- It became the spot always used for stand-ups since it had the best view, but always muddy and they couldn't keep grass
- Started in 1998 - Clinton went to Africa; WH installed honeycomb grating and gravel to create Pebble Beach
- President Bush installed permanent stone to hide wires and create more permanent home for press
- Press shots from above WH are taken from buildings across Lafayette Park where tents are located

### **Correspondents**

- TV cameras have designated spots for reporting throughout the day
- Each WH correspondent has unique view of WH behind them in broadcast
- Correspondents spend majority of day in press briefing room but use Pebble Beach for broadcasts and interviews

## PRESS BRIEFING ROOM

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- Created in 1969 by Nixon to accommodate the growing number of reporters assigned to the White House.
- In 2000, was renamed the "James S. Brady Press Briefing Room" in honor of James Brady, the press secretary who was shot and permanently disabled during an assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan in 1981.
- Site originally housed FDR's swimming pool used for polio rehab-installed by the March of Dimes.
- Empty pool still underneath.
  - Deep end under podium, shallow end under camera crews.
- By 2000, 18 miles TV cable installed underground.
- Current theater-style seating arrangement.
  - The White House Correspondence Association assigns seating by organization name plates on chairs
- About 200 people cover WH - 60 regular WH correspondents
- Daily use:
  - 9:45 Press Gaggle, Pres. Sec. briefs reporters on upcoming events
  - Afternoon - on-camera briefing
- Behind the briefing room you can see the desks/ office space for press.

# **East Wing Tour Guide**

## **EAST WING OVERVIEW**

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- A two-story structure on the east side of the White House Executive Residence, the home of the President.
- Serves as office space for the offices of Legislative Affairs and the First Lady and her staff, including the White House Social Secretary and White House Graphics and Calligraphy Office.
- Includes the White House Theater, the visitor's entrance, and the East Colonnade
- Social visitors to the White House usually enter in the East Wing
- The East Wing as it exists today was added to the White House in 1942.
  - Around the same time, Theodore Roosevelt's coatroom became the movie theater.
  - Later, offices for calligraphers and the social secretary were placed in the East Wing.
  - Eleanor Roosevelt employed the first Social Secretary.
- Rosalynn Carter, in 1977, was the first to place her personal office in the East Wing and to formally call it the "Office of the First Lady"

## **EAST COLONNADE**

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- The corridor connecting the body of the East Wing to the residence.
- Each set of framed photos in the hallway has a theme.
- Out the window is the First Lady's Garden, also called the Kennedy Garden, after First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy.
- Through the door on the right is the First Family's movie theater, see photo (1).

## **Book Seller's Room**

- Used to sell books in the room when White House tours were open to the public, before 9/11, during certain hours without pre-security clearance.
- The two Presidents featured in the room--Fillmore and Arthur--both used to sell books.

## **LIBRARY**

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- Was used as a laundry room until Roosevelt's renovations in 1902
- Became a library until 1935.
- Contains 2,700 works of American life and thought.
- The room is an actual functioning library, First Family can check out books here.

### **Library Art:**

- Native American portraits by Charles Bird King
- Loans from the National Museum of the American Indian
- Chandelier, from the home of *Last of the Mohicans* author
- Room contains George Washington's sword.

### **Mountain at Bear Lake – Taos by Georgia O'Keefe**

- The O'Keefe painting was purchased by Hilary Clinton in 1997 and is the first painting by a major 20<sup>th</sup> Century American women to be exhibited in the state rooms of the White House.

## **THE VERMEIL ROOM**

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- The room takes its name from the large collection of vermeil (gilded silver) received by the White House in 1958 as a bequest of Margaret Thompson Biddle.
  - Largest collection of vermeil outside of the Vatican.
- The 1,575 piece collection contains examples of work by the most prominent English and French silversmiths working in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- The room has been used as a coat room, dressing room, office, waiting room, conference room, and billiard room.
- First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy painted most of the wooden panels in the East Wing, including those in this room.
- This room is also used to display portraits of first ladies who served in the mid twentieth century.

### **Eleanor Roosevelt by Douglas Chandor**

- Multiple image portrait

### **Larry Bird Johnson by Elizabeth Shoumatoff**

- Mrs. Johnson chose the Jefferson Memorial as her background

### **Jacqueline Kennedy by Aaron Shikler**

- Painted in 1970 in her New York apartment

### **Nancy Reagan by Aaron Shikler**

- Same artist as Kennedy, this portrait hangs on the east wall

### **Patricia Ryan Nixon by Henriette Wyeth**

- Hangs on the north wall

### **Lou Henry Hoover by Richard Brown**

- Hangs on the north wall

## THE CHINA ROOM

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- Almost every past President is represented in the China Room either by state or family china or glassware.
- The collection is arranged chronologically,
  - Beginning to the right of the fireplace.
- Even the earliest Presidents received government funds to purchase state china.
- The China Room bathroom was a favorite of George HW Bush.
- Grace Coolidge's dress had to be lengthened after the portrait was completed, because you could see her ankles and people were offended, see photo (2).
  - Her dogs name was Rob Roy, named after a prohibition cocktail, which is essentially a Manhattan but with Scotch whiskey exclusively.
- The red color scheme was determined by the color of Mrs. Coolidge's dress in her portrait.



## THE EAST ROOM

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- The largest room in the house
- Designated by architect James Hoban as the "Public Audience Room."
- Used for large gatherings, such as press conferences, bill-signing ceremonies, after-dinner entertaining, concerts, weddings, funerals, and award presentations.
- Where President Obama walked out to announce the death of Osama bin Laden
- Chelsea Clinton used to roller blade in the East Room.
- Teddy Roosevelt used to box with his staff in the East Room.
- Susan Ford, daughter of President Gerald Ford, hosted her senior prom in the East Room, see photo (3). The Beach Boys were set to play the gig, but declined after they were denied permission to film the event.
- Abigail Adams used the unfinished East Room to hang her laundry out to dry.

### ***George Washington by Gilbert Stuart***

- The only object to have remained in the White House since it opened in 1800.
- In 1814, the British burned the White House after U.S. forces set fire to the Canadian parliament. The George Washington portrait was saved by a fleeing Dolly Madison, and is one of the few things that survived the fire. She cut the portrait out of the frame in order to save it.

## THE GREEN ROOM

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- Throughout much of its existence, the Green Room has served as a parlor for teas and receptions.
- By 1825, under John Quincy Adams, the room had become the “Green Drawing Room,” named for the color of the draperies.
- The furnishings reflect the Federal period and most date 1800-1815.
- Many of the pieces are attributed to the New York workshop of the well-known Scottish-born cabinetmaker Duncan Phyfe.

### **Adams Coffee Urn**

- Engraved on the front of this English silver-plated urn is the monogram “JAA” for John and Abigail Adams.

### **Benjamin Franklin by David Martin**

- When this portrait was painted in 1767, Franklin was the most famous of all Americans, at home and abroad.
- He is portrayed reviewing property deeds from a dispute he settled for a Scotsman, who commissioned this likeness.
- Overlooking the scene is a bust of Sir Isaac Newton - mathematician, scientist, and philosopher.

### **Sand Dunes at Sunset, Atlantic City by Henry Ossawa Tanner**

- Tanner was the most distinguished African-American artist of the nineteenth century and the first to be represented here.

### **Independence Hall in Philadelphia by Ferdinand Richardt**

- This wonderful street scene of mid-19th century Philadelphia was probably sketched by the artist in 1858, but not painted until several years later.
- In 1962, an American antique dealer discovered it in India and purchased it for seven dollars.

### **The Mosquito Net by John Singer Sargent**

- This scene was painted in 1912 during an annual summer trip to either Italy or Switzerland.

### **The Builders by Jacob Lawrence**

- Jacob Lawrence was one of the first artists to represent Modernist depictions of African- Americans.

## THE BLUE ROOM

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- Oval shape: Architect James Hoban's 1792 plan for the White House included three stacked oval rooms in the center of the building that form a projecting bow on the south side.
  - The creation of the Oval Office in the West Wing in 1909 was inspired by these oval rooms in the Residence.
- Planned to be the most elegant of the State Floor parlors, this room is typically used to receive important guests, including the leaders of foreign nations.
- This parlor became known as the Blue Room in the Martin Van Buren administration, when blue textiles were introduced to the room. Previously, the upholstery had been red.
- The Blue Room houses especially fine life portraits of the first four presidents to live in the White House, painted by important early American artists
  - John Adams by John Trumbull
  - Thomas Jefferson by Rembrandt Peale
  - James Madison by John Vanderlyn
  - James Monroe by Samuel Morse.
- Also notable is the portrait of William Howard Taft by Anders Zorn located above the doorway which shows Taft in the Blue Room.
- Family events held here include the wedding of Grover Cleveland, the only sitting President to marry in the White House.
- The Blue Room is home to the Official White House Christmas tree during the holidays, smaller trees can also be found in various rooms throughout the residence during the holidays.

## THE RED ROOM

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- This parlor has been known as the “Red Room” since 1845, when a suite of furniture upholstered in “Crimson Plush” was introduced to the room.
- The Red Room is furnished in the Empire style of 1810-1830, influenced by the archeological findings of Napoleon’s campaign in Egypt (1798-99).
- The stars, urns, lyres, and sphinxes that adorn the furniture in this room are characteristic of the Empire style.
- George W. Bush used to clear out the Red Room every Valentine’s Day for a romantic dinner with Laura.

### **Rutherford B. Hayes by Daniel Huntington**

- This portrait of President Hayes is a particularly appropriate painting for this room. President Hayes was actually sworn in here in 1877, after a disputed election.
- Out-going President Grant witnessed the Chief Justice of the United States administer the oath of office to Hayes, unbeknownst to the dinner guests next door in the State Dining Room.

### **Landscapes**

- Albert Bierstadt’s *Rocky Mountain Landscape*, John Frederick Kensett’s *Niagara Falls*, Martin Johnson Heade’s *Florida Sunrise*, and Alfred Bricher’s *Castle Rock, Nahant, Massachusetts*.

### **The Van Burens**

- The prominent painting in the Red Room, hanging over the mantel is the portrait of Angelica Singleton Van Buren, daughter-in-law and official hostess for President Martin Van Buren.
- This portrait by Henry Inman includes a bust of President Van Buren in the background to remind viewers of her connection to the president.
- President Van Buren is also represented in the room with a portrait painted by Francis Alexander.

## THE STATE DINING ROOM

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- This room was Thomas Jefferson's Cabinet room and office, where he and his secretary, Meriwether Lewis, planned the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1802.
- It has served as the State Dining Room since 1809, with the smaller Family Dining Room to its north.
- In 1902, with the removal of a staircase at this end of the Cross Hall, the State Dining Room was enlarged and completely redesigned for President Theodore Roosevelt.
- Remaining from that renovation are the oak paneling (first painted in 1952), the three eagle-pedestal side tables, the Queen Anne-style chairs, and the lighting fixtures.
- The table centerpiece is a French gilded bronze plateau purchased by James Monroe in 1817. Its mirrored floor was designed to reflect the candles held by figures of classical women on its gallery and the flowers in complementary baskets.
- Wild animal heads that had been hung on the dark wooden walls were removed in the 1920s.
- The center plaque on the mantel is incised with the last sentence from a letter President John Adams wrote his wife from the new President's House in 1800 -"I pray Heaven to bestow the best of blessings on this house and all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof."

### **Abraham Lincoln by George P.A. Healy**

- Healy painted six presidential portraits in the late 1850s and is the most represented artist in the White House collection. He submitted this painting to an 1869 competition for an official portrait of Lincoln, but it was not selected by the government.
- Purchased by the family, it was bequeathed to the White House by the widow of Robert Todd Lincoln.

## **THE ENTRANCE HALL, THE CROSS HALL, AND THE GRAND STAIRCASE**

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### **The Entrance Hall**

- Overlooking Pennsylvania Avenue, this hall serves as a grand foyer for the official reception rooms on the State Floor.
- During events, the United States Marine Band often performs in this location.
- In 1985 Prince Charles and Princess Diana visited the White House for a gala dinner hosted by President Reagan and his wife Nancy.
  - Guests included Eastwood, John Travolta, Tom Selleck and singer Neil Diamond as well as politicians and businessmen.
  - During the gala, First Lady Nancy Reagan took John Travolta aside and informed him that Princess Diana wanted a dance.
  - The subsequent photographs of the glamorous Princess and romantic lead of such movies as Saturday Night Fever and Grease, made the front page of every newspaper and magazine in the world, see photo (5).
  - For John Travolta who had been experiencing the rejections of the film industry, this spot light on him and the fact that Princess Diana would consider him important enough to wish to dance with him, revived his self-belief in himself. He attributes his resultant soaring film career to this moment in his life.

### **The Cross Hall**

- Behind the Entrance Hall is the central corridor that extends between the East Room and the State Dining Room.
- In 1837, to conserve heat in the state rooms, a glass screen was installed between the columns. In 1882, it was replaced by a screen of Tiffany stained glass.
- Removed in 1902 and sold at auction, the Tiffany screen is believed to have been destroyed in a fire in 1923.

### **The Grand Staircase**

- This staircase leads from the State Floor to the Second Floor and is used primarily for ceremonial occasions.
- On the lowest landing, President Ronald Reagan took his second oath of office on January 20, 1985.

## **Portraits**

- Portraits of the most recent former presidents traditionally are hung in the Entrance Hall, the Cross Hall, and along the Grand Staircase.
  - The portrait of Bill Clinton by Simmie Knox, 2001, shows him in the Oval Office.
  - The 1994 portrait of George H.W. Bush by Herbert Abrams depicts him in his Residence Office with a painting he much admired, George Healy's *The Peacemakers*, in the background.
  - The Kennedy portrait was painted posthumously. He is looking down because the artist said he could not accurately paint the eyes of a subject without actually seeing them in person.

## **Date Stone**

- On the floor between the columns is a stone commemorating White House construction projects.
  - 1792 (the laying of the White House cornerstone)
  - 1817 (the re-opening of the White House after the 1814 burning during the War of 1812)
  - 1902 (the Theodore Roosevelt renovation).
  - 1952 Truman renovation

## **Grand Piano**

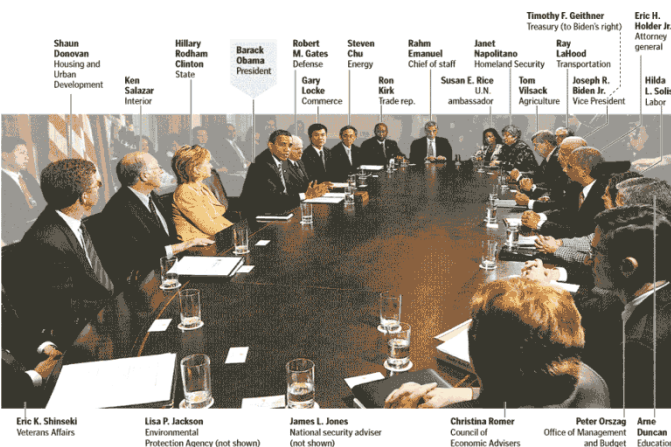
- This piano was the 300,000th manufactured by Steinway & Sons
- Was designed especially for the White House in 1938.
- It replaced another Steinway, the 100,000th produced in 1903, now at the Smithsonian Institution.
- Gilded scenes of American music and dance appear on the case - a New England barn dance, a cowboy playing his guitar, the Virginia reel, two dancing field hands..
- The piano is supported by three large gilded eagles in the Art Moderne style.

## PRESIDENTIAL TIMELINE

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George Washington	1789-1797
John Adams	1797-1801
Thomas Jefferson	1801-1809
James Madison	1809-1817
James Monroe	1817-1825
John Quincy Adams	1825-1829
Andrew Jackson	1829-1837
Martin Van Buren	1837-1841
William Henry Harrison	1841-1841
John Tyler	1841-1845
James K Polk	1845-1849
Zachary Taylor	1849-1850
Millard Fillmore	1850-1853
Franklin Pierce	1853-1857
James Buchanan	1857-1861
Abraham Lincoln	1861-1865
Andrew Johnson	1865-1869
Ulysses S Grant	1869-1877
Rutherford B Hayes	1877-1881
James A Garfield	1881-1881
Chester A Arthur	1881-1885
Grover Cleveland	1885-1889
Benjamin Harrison	1889-1893
Grover Cleveland	1893-1897
William McKinley	1897-1901
Theodore Roosevelt	1901-1909
William Howard Taft	1909-1913
Woodrow Wilson	1913-1921
Warren G Harding	1921-1923
Calvin Coolidge	1923-1929
Herbert Hoover	1929-1933
Franklin D Roosevelt	1933-1945
Harry S Truman	1945-1953
Dwight D Eisenhower	1953-1961
John F Kennedy	1961-1963
Lyndon B Johnson	1963-1969
Richard Nixon	1969-1974
Gerald Ford	1974-1977
Jimmy Carter	1977-1981
Ronald Reagan	1981-1989
George HW Bush	1989-1993
Bill Clinton	1993-2001
George W Bush	2001-2009
Barack Obama	2009-





1. A plane lands on West Executive Avenue

2. Woodrow Wilson's Sheep Graze on the South Lawn

3. The "Beer Summit" between Prof. Henry Louis Gates and Sgt. James Crowley

4. Betty Ford has a "what the hell" moment on her final day as First Lady

## White House West Wing Tour Photo Guide



5. Dwight D. Eisenhower was the first president to use a helicopter that took off and landed on the White House lawn (pictured here in 1957)

6. Cabinet Room seating chart example

White House East Wing Tour  
*Photo Guide*

7. President Obama watches a 3-D movie in the White House Movie Theater.



8. Portrait of Grace Coolidge. She insisted on being painted with her collie, Rob Roy.



9. Susan Ford dances with her prom date in the East Room.

10. Halloween at the White House, 2013.

11. Princess Diana and John Travolta dancing in the East Wing.

